6894

R 122171ZSEPTBQUIV

FM-Coup URGENT

PARIS, SEPT 21, REUTER - EMPEROR BOKASSA I OF THE CENTRAL AFRICAN EMPIRE HAS BEEN OVERTHROWN IN A BLOODLESS COUP AND MAY HAVE LEFT THE COUNTRY, FRENCH RADIO SAID TODAY.

THE RADIO, QUOTING THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN THE CAPITAL OF BANGUI, SAID THAT FORMER PRESIDENT DAVID DACKO HAD RESUMED POWER.

THE RADIO ADDED THAT UNCONFIRMED REPORTS SAID THE SELF-PROCLAIMED EMPEROR WAS HEADING FOR LIBYA. HE HAS SEVERAL PROPERTIES IN FRANCE, AND THE FRENCH PRESS REPORTED UNUSUAL ACTIVITY AT A CASTLE OWNED BY HIM, SOUTH OF PARIS. HIS WIFE CATHERINE WAS SEEN IN THE VILLAGE NEAR THE CASTLE LAST WEEK, THE RADIO ADDED.

FRENCH RADIO SAID DAVID DACKO, A NEPHEW OF EMPEROR BOKASSA WHO WAS OVERTHROWN BY THE DICTATOR IN 1966, WENT ON THE AIR TO PROCLAIM A REPUBLIC AND THE FORMATION OF A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY.

IT SAID MR DACKO HAD DECLARED THAT THE EMPEROR WAS NO LONGER FIT TO RUN THE COUNTRY.

REUTER 0155

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY NLS DATE 10/21/84
RDS☐ or XDS☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. E.O. 9(5)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKING ☐
DECLASSIFIED☐ DOWNGRADED☑
RELEASE DENIED☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

6895

R 122411ZSEPTBQUIV

FM-Coup 2 PARIS

BOKASSA CAME TO POWER IN 1966, WHEN AS ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF HE OVERTHREW HIS NEPHEW DACKO, WHOM HE LATER ENGAGED AS AN ADVISER.

PRESIDENT BOKASSA CHANGED THE NAME OF THE COUNTRY FROM THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC TO THE CENTRAL AFRICAN EMPIRE IN DECEMBER, 1976, AND PROCLAIMED HIMSELF EMPEROR BOKASSA I AT AN ELABORATE CEREMONY.

HIS RULE ATTRACTED SEVERE CRITICISM FROM ABROAD.

IN 1974, HE ORDERED THAT THIEVES SHOULD HAVE ONE EAR CUT OFF FOR ONE THEFT, TWO EARS FOR TWO THEFTS, THEIR RIGHT HANDS FOR THREE THEFTS AND TO BE EXECUTED FOR FOUR. THE FIRST WAVE OF PUNISHMENTS WAS REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT UNDER HIS PERSONAL SUPERVISION.

LAST MONTH A FIVE-NATION AFRICAN COMMISSION FOUND THAT THE EMPEROR HAD ORDERED, AND ALMOST CERTAINLY TAKEN PART IN, A MASSACRE OF AP[illegible] 100 SCHOOLCHILDREN IN APRIL OF THIS YEAR.

REUTER 0157